

Introduction of Renewable Energy to Rural and Indigenous Peoples: Gender Considerations

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Visualization: Identifying Energy Solutions to Rural Needs

- ♦ Who tends to implement renewable energy projects and programs?
- ♦ What is the composition of a typical field team?
- ♦ Who are the most common local participants with which we work (e.g. in energy ministries, local businesses, community representatives)?
- ♦ What methods do we use to determine local needs for which renewable energy is the “solution”?



What images do you see?

- ♦ Men and women? *Or more men than women?*
- ♦ Multi-disciplinary? *Or mostly engineers?*
- ♦ Northern and Southern perspectives represented?
Or mostly Northern?
- ♦ Participatory processes with **demand-driven** solutions? *Or technology-driven solutions for a demand that we presume exists?*



Why is gender important to the introduction of renewable energy technologies to rural, often indigenous communities?



Rural energy “solutions”: the gender element

- ◆ Understanding needs means understanding who the consumers are and how they use energy.
- ◆ Men and women have different energy needs.
- ◆ In rural context, women are the primary energy consumers, with cooking dominating consumption.
- ◆ However, women are rarely included in determining the priorities of “energy projects” or in how they are designed or implemented.



Considerations to increasing women's participation

- ♦ Limitations: social, cultural
 - decisions often made by men, at all levels
 - gender roles vary from culture to culture and over time, making standard approaches difficult
- ♦ Ramifications
 - priorities will reflect primary energy needs (e.g. cooking)
 - greater stakeholder participation leads to greater ownership
 - by engaging primary consumers, “solutions” will be more sustainable



Developing gender-sensitive energy solutions

- ◆ Demand assessment
 - gender analysis: determine men's and women's roles, needs
 - work with community development organizations knowledgeable about local culture, languages, traditions
- ◆ Project development
 - ensure participation of all stakeholders
 - may require special effort due to social, cultural constraints
- ◆ Training
 - provide supportive learning environment for women
 - engage at all levels, from project design to maintenance



Developing gender-sensitive energy solutions

♦ Credit management

- women have good track record for credit repayment
- micro-credit programs targeted at women should be coupled with adequate training so credit can be well-managed.

♦ Promotion

- recognize women as a powerful market force;
- good “solutions” will sell themselves through the grapevine.

